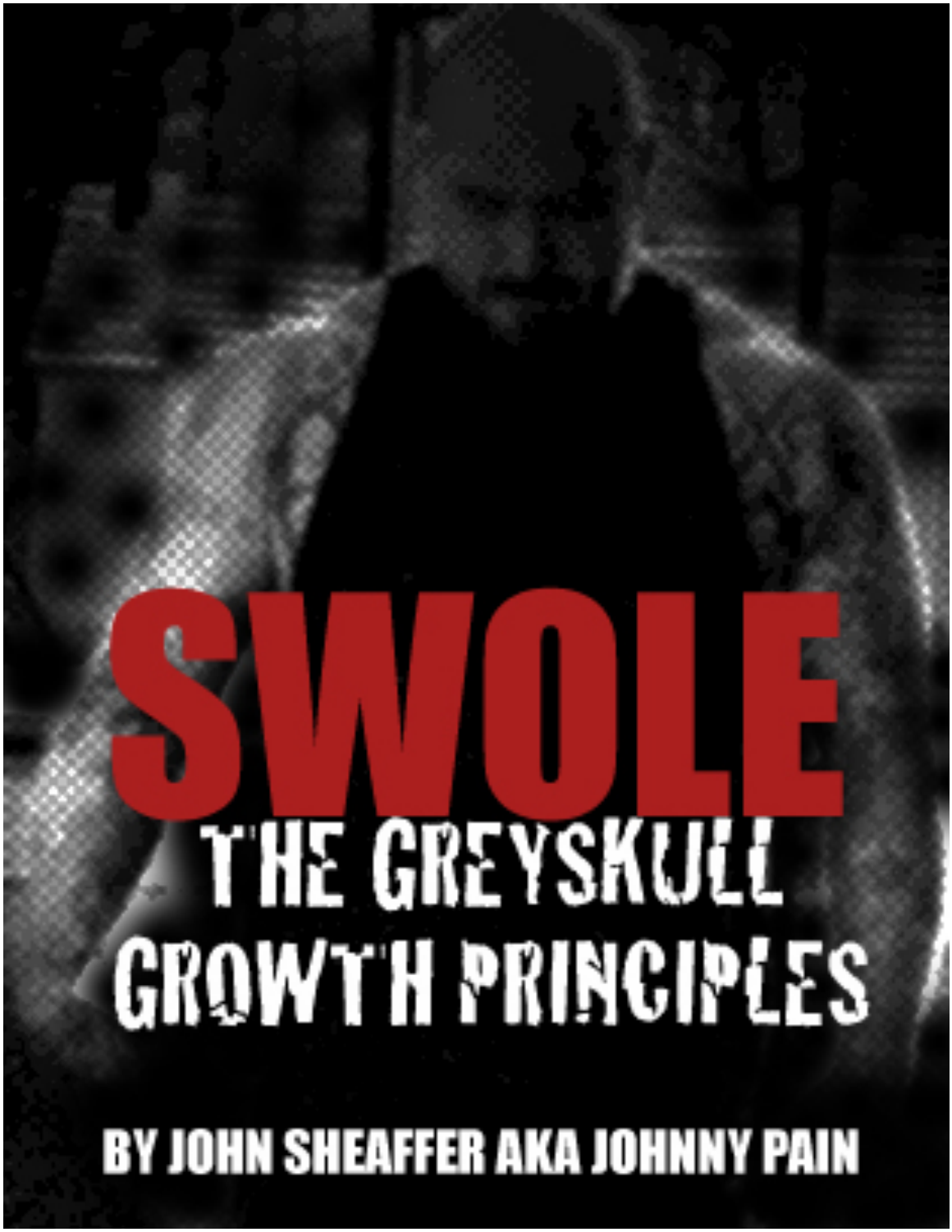
SWOLE
THE GREYSKULL
GROWTH PRINCIPLES
BY JOHN SHEAFFER AKA JOHNNY PAIN

SWOLE: The Greyskull Growth Principles

by John Sheaffer aka Johnny Pain

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Introduction

The decision to write this book came after working with several hundred people through phone consultations, seminars, via my internet forum, and in the personal training sector who shared the goal of adding significant amounts of quality muscle to their body without piling on a bunch of useless body fat in the process. This caveat was of particular concern to most due to either their own prior experience in attempting to pack on the muscle and "fat-fucking" themselves in the process, or simply from observing the lack of success others around them, either in person or on the internet, had in accomplishing the lean mass gain part of their goal without its ugly, fat, troll of a friend tagging along, being the cock-blocking third wheel.

In addition to working with those who were trying to better fill out their shirts and look like they actually lift weights while wearing sweats in the winter time, I have an equal if not greater amount of experience in dealing with those who were misled or misguided one way or another on their quest for greater girth where it counts. These poor souls had fucked around wound up doughy sacks of slightly stronger, though much less attractive and confident, jiggly, abstinent Jello.

There is a constant barrage of poor quality information on the subject of mass gain on the Internet, particularly within the communities in which these individuals are likely to find themselves as strength training beginners. It is then no surprise that they end up populating the wall of the club instead of finding themselves covered in glitter, making it rain on hoards of attractive women completely incapable of resisting their sheer primal masculinity and testosterone exhaust fume pheromones (ok, so the latter is not guaranteed or anything, at least not with *this* book, but a strong, muscular physique is definitely going to help you in the quest for that level of swag).

A very common "progression" (to borrow a cliché used all to frequently in these circles today) of thinking and influence that many of those who seek my services undergo seems to be as follows:

A guy decides that he wants to get in shape and look good so he pokes around online or by some other means and ends up joining a bizarre cult based around a sort of circuit training religion that promotes becoming "elite" and recommends a diet that is suitable for adequately feeding a small child who has had gastric bypass surgery for a few days to keep him alive but does not render him nutritionally capable of really doing any sort of extraneous movement.

He soon finds himself devoid of any and all muscle mass, but in possession of a sweet six-pack (if he is genetically pre-disposed to have them show at low bodyweights). His drawers are full of board shorts, his closet full of shoes that look like gloves which serve as birth control for normal females but are ironically not needed for the females that he mates with, the gristly communal depositories that populate his cult headquarters. Their wombs are commonly incapable of bearing children due to the heavy Anavar and

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Winstrol use as well as their single digit body fat levels attained through the even more restrictive version of the aforementioned, cult-approved diet.

A few months to a year of cult life go by after which he realizes that maybe this isn't the life for him. He catches a bit of Conan the Barbarian on cable and remembers when he wanted to look like a sword swinging man's man and have women swoon over his god-like physique. He realizes that the weights that he is moving in the gym are considerably less than those of his 13-year-old nephew who just joined the high school wrestling team. He also comes to the realization that he is as close to going to the Olympics for weightlifting as I am to winning an award for smallest genitals on a grown man with tattoos on his face under the age of 30.

Some things need to change and they need to change fast.

This leads him to the next step in the chain of events that I see all too often.

The guy has been around the Internet a bit, read some forum posts and picked up a book or two off of Amazon. He's lurked for a bit on the forums and determined that he wants to focus on getting bigger and stronger for a while. The previous camp he was associated with had made him believe that strength was relative, and that strength to bodyweight ratio, and the ability to complete certain pre-determined tasks in impressive times were the most important things to train for.

His initial goals of looking better had been replaced or moved to the back burner. He was told that a focus on aesthetics was just plain vanity, ironically by a woman trainer wearing a sports bra, knee socks, and short lycra shorts. He believed that his new, greater purpose in life was to serve his cult and make the "leader board" in the spaceship motor pool, which they referred to as the "box".

Now in his new home, his new online friends are telling him that it is all about how much weight he can move from point A to point B. He is being told that in order to be a man he needs to weigh a certain amount, which he finds himself about forty pounds shy of after cult life rid him of his muscle mass. He really needs to change things for the better, and this is just the direction he needs to go.

He has his new shoes, his new belt, which he will wait to use until his working sets of course, and his expensive new rubber weight set. All he needs now is what?

You guessed it, a few gallons of milk.

Fast-forward a few months. At this point he is disappointed in how much body fat he has put on. He misses his six-pack and is frustrated that he has found himself looking at the sight he sees in the mirror.

How did this happen?

This is not what he set out to do at all. Where he envisioned sleek, chiseled abdominal muscles standing out in bold relief, he has stretch marks and love handles. Where his childhood wrestling heroes had their thick pectorals rife with striations and easily moved with conscious control he has a saggy pair of man boobs. Where his "guns" are supposed

to be he sees a pair of smooth arms that lack any significant development and certainly do not turn heads in a tank top. This is just not going to work.

Some more Internet research ensues. Soon he finds himself visiting my site (strengthvillain.com); he's heard my name. I am the guy that members of both camps trash talked regularly, he remembers that part, but he never really did understand why.

He reads through some of the threads on the forum, searches all of the back articles and buys a few eBooks. At this point he registers for the forum and is welcomed to the board by myself or one of my associates. He asks a few questions in the Q and A, bracing himself for the lashing that he is expecting for being so foolish as to ask a question on the Internet, only to discover that his question is answered politely and completely with a noticeable absence of any condescending bullshit. He's hooked. What happens next is truly enlightening and influences the biggest physical change he has made in his life to date.

The Awakening: Getting Congruent and Re-Claiming *Your* Goals

The one thing that both of the camps he was previously associated with seemed to share were their contemptuous beliefs regarding the bodybuilding community. They both scoffed at their methods and labeled the athletes themselves with various pejorative terms, from meatheads to faggots (the latter making the least amount of sense to me; most of the guys I know who are interested in bodybuilding got into it to impress girls, myself included. I have an admittedly limited knowledge of homosexuality, but as far as I know impressing and attracting girls is not one of the top planks on their manifesto).

"Bodybuilders are not strong."

"Bodybuilders can't tie their shoes, walk around the block, jump on a 48" box" (insert any other human task here, it works, and has probably been said on one of the forums).

"Bodybuilding is a purely narcissistic endeavor." (so is dressing well or applying makeup)

"Bodybuilders are dumb, meatheads, slow…" (Insert other derogatory remark about the intelligence of bodybuilders).

All of the above are statements that are perpetuated in the aforementioned circles and create the beliefs that lead the cult members to set their goals, their own goals that got them to set foot in the gym in the first place, aside in order to adopt their new goals that are conveniently assigned to them by those who are truly in the know (who ironically do not appear to possess the aesthetically pleasing bodies that they the impressionable trainee initially sought to attain by looking on the 'net either).

The truth is, none of the above statements are by default true. Sure there are bodybuilders that are not mental giants, are gay, are not athletic, or are overly narcissistic. Those are characteristics that are present in individuals in any community however, including the ones that criticize the bodybuilders so openly and readily.

The one statement out of the ones listed above that always gets me however is that bodybuilders are not strong. This one I always found comical because of its blanket nature. I am not going to say that bodybuilders are all beasts or are all stronger than members of this group or that group, lest I sound as asinine as the others for speaking in such unsubstantiated absolutes. I will however say that I have seen some of the most impressive feats of strength I have ever witnesses performed by bodybuilders and that I have never met a bodybuilder (the serious variety now, not the guy at Gold's who goes in on Monday and bench presses 135 for ten for ten years) who had an impressive amount of muscular development who did not have grossly above average strength to go with it.

Am I going to send you all out to by Jan Tana and a pair of posing trunks next?

Of course not.

What I am going to do however is clear the air of all of the mythical trash talk bullshit that gets in the way of you learning the lessons that you can learn from the bodybuilding community. Think about it for a minute, if your initial goal or the goal that you have now includes or included building an attractive, muscular physique that you could be proud to display, wouldn't those who compete in that very endeavor be good folks to borrow lessons from? Logic would tell you so, but you've been told otherwise.

Slow-go cardio was stupid and was not as good for getting you lean as high intensity circuits or barbell complexes were; yet bodybuilders regularly get leaner than you have ever been able to by doing exactly that.

Isolation movements are pointless and serve no purpose; yet you've never been able to get your shoulders to look like cannonballs, or get your calves to grow.

Shakes and other supplements are useless, you can get everything you need from food or milk; yet bodybuilders make heavy use of shakes and supplements and have much better results with the very goal you set out to accomplish than you ever have.

I really could go on here, but I will spare you the obvious at this point.

There are many lessons to be learned from the wisdom acquired by those who have sought out to develop lean, muscular, healthy bodies for many years now. This collective "bro science" (as it is so lovingly referred to by its opponents) is some of the most valuable information you can receive if you are truly interested in changing your body for the better, building a masterpiece of dense muscle with little fat in the context of this book.

In this book I will serve as your guide and help you to apply some of these lessons. You will all be graduates of my University of Applied Bro-Sciences after reading and studying this work from cover to cover.

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If you've been lying to yourself or accepting someone else's projected goals as your own it is time to purge that crap out of your psyche. If you set out to develop a strong, aesthetically pleasing body that turns heads, causes large scale vaginal flooding in public places, and that above all you can be proud to inhabit, then it is time to get congruent and make shit happen.

Sync your beliefs with your goals, and make your day-to-day actions manifest what it is that you are after. Diet, training, supplementation, all are equally important in this quest, but all are trumped by the mental aspects of the game.

Get your mind right. Grow big, grow strong, and look good. You've got one shot at this shit and only one body to do it in.

Make it count.

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Section One:

The Growth Principles

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Chapter One:

Accountability (Giving a Shit)

The most common reason that people are unhappy with their body composition, whether in the context of trying to add mass, lose body fat, or attempting to do both at the same time, is that they often lack the kind of accountability for their diet that is necessary to make the changes that they are after. If you want your body to change for the better, you need to be keeping score. Much like being completely unaware of your financial situation; where you stand in terms of net worth, assets and liabilities, or ignoring your bills as they come in won't get you on the road to building wealth and financial independence any time soon, not keeping track of your diet is certainly not going to do much to get you on the fast road to being an Ass-Pulling Adonis.

You need to have a plan, and you have to track the steps that you are taking in implementing your plan in order to determine whether or not the strategy is proving to be effective in helping you accomplish your ultimate goal. Getting the body you want is all about gathering data, and adjusting your approach based on the feedback you are receiving.

The Perils of the "Accidental Eater"

The majority of the people you will encounter have a very relaxed way of approaching their diets; they eat "accidentally" as I call it. Typically they will think about what they are going to eat about ten minutes or so prior to actually eating the meal. This is what "normal" people do these days in this society which allows such ready access to such a plethora of foods, some great, some not so great, to choose from.

The fact that you have purchased this book tells that you are very different from the "normal" person already in terms of how you approach your fitness level, overall health, and appearance.

As I have stated before on numerous occasions, if you adopt the habits of a particular group that you are attempting to emulate, you will quickly begin to transform yourself into "one of the crowd" so to say. Eating accidentally is a characteristic possessed by the majority of population, the majority of which are unhealthy, and unhappy with their bodies and their appearance. The Hollywood studs and pro athletes who you would like to resemble likely have a bit more structure to what they eat on a regular basis. If you eat accidentally as most normal people do, then chances are you will continue to look like most normal people do, or at least a lot more like a normal person than the type of sex symbol you would like to become. If you get accountable, train, and eat a solid diet with

consistency you will invariably begin to resemble a guy who trains hard, eats a solid diet, and gives enough of a shit about himself to have some level of concern with what he is feeding the fornication vessel that is his body.

You cannot affect very specific and desirable, deliberate change in your body by having an accidental approach to your diet and training. It's just not going to happen. The ideas and methods in this book will allow you to simply and easily take control of your diet and develop the kind of accountability required to achieve the success you desire.

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Chapter Two:

The Base Layer and the Surplus

The Surplus

Bodybuilders have had the "secret" to growing lean body mass without adding boatloads of fat figured out for many years. The trick if you want to call it that is to take in a small surplus of calories over what is needed in order to maintain your current level of development.

There is something of a hierarchy of needs in terms of caloric intake for someone who is looking to add lean body mass, basically the hierarchy is as follows (Strap in guys it's BroScience time):

First you need to be taking in enough calories to satisfy your default need for calories at rest, call it BMR (basal metabolic rate), or RMR (resting metabolic rate), I don't care which, pick one it's not important, the idea is however. Your body will burn a certain amount of calories per day simply to exist. This represents the first tier of caloric requirements.

Next, your body will require the calories necessary to fuel your day-to-day activities. This varies greatly from person to person since the daily activities that people engage in vary so much. This is one of the variables that make determining any type of accurate "maintenance" value for calories so difficult.

Once those basics are satisfied, you will need calories to fuel your training efforts.

Once that's said and done you'll need some calories to use during the recovery process Though I very am very vocal regarding the idiocy of the "just eat more to recover" bullshit logic, the fact is that the task does require some raw materials, just not a dump truck full on a daily basis.

Once all of those troops are accounted for you will need something left over to build new tissue with.

Enter the surplus.

Trick here obviously is to have just the right amount to build the lean mass that you want without getting so much that you are spilling over the excess into the super un-sexy fat reserves.

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As a quick aside, can you see (through my highly scientific explanation here) how silly the "you're not eating enough to recover" logic is nine times out of ten?

Following me yet?

Ok, how many people who claim to be, or are being told that they are "not eating enough to recover" are fat?

I don't necessarily mean obese, but fat. Unattractive, jiggly, fat.

If you said almost all of those who have been told they aren't eating enough to recover either have fat-fucked themselves to some degree, or are in the process of fat-fucking themselves, give yourself a pat on the back. Then ask yourself how the hell they have enough calories to get fat, but yet not enough to recover with.

Mind blowing stuff, huh?

Okay, we'll move on.

Base Caloric Requirements: The Foundation Layer on Which the Surplus is Added

Different formulas are in existence and have been used for some time to determine a start point from which to add calories and create a surplus, a "maintenance" level of intake. I have never been a fan of using them as hard numbers since there is so much variance between individuals in terms of metabolism and activity level, but they at least represent a desire to establish a plan and set some sort of foundation that can be built upon as the situation unfolds. In this book I will describe and outline the methods that I have successfully used to take the principles long trusted and proven by bodybuilders and simplify them for use by the more casual, less neurotic trainee to build quality lean body mass while keeping body fat at acceptable levels.

We will examine how the baseline diet is established and then how to layer in or out the amount of surplus calories without ever really focusing on any hard numbers or tracking much from day to day.

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Small Incremental Increases: Letting the Diet Grow as You Grow

Like the weight being used on the barbell, dumbbells, or machine in a good weight training program designed to increase strength and muscle mass, the diet, specifically the macronutrient (and by extension caloric) intake needs to be increased in small, incremental doses. Much like loading a bench press bar up to 315 lbs and attempting to start your strength progression from there, launching headfirst into a diet featuring gross caloric excess from the start is not going to end well. A beginner is able to get a growth stimulus from a much lighter load than a stronger, more experienced trainee. Likewise, a beginner who weighs 160 lb will rarely need anything near the caloric intake that a 225 lb strong, experienced lifter will in order to elicit new muscle growth. Beyond a basic surplus you are simply feeding the accumulation of unsightly and unhealthy body fat. This is definitely not what the overwhelming majority of people that I work with are looking for when they say they want to gain mass.

The use of "layers" in the diet act as a simple and easy method by which one can add or subtract macronutrients and calories to or from the diet. The layering idea is one that I have successfully used with several hundred people at this point. It is the simplest method I know of to explain and implement the seemingly complex techniques for intake manipulation used by bodybuilders. By creating a "base layer" and then building on as needed, you are able to manipulate dietary variables with a surprising amount of precision without being completely neurotic about things.

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Chapter Three:
The Importance of Food Quality

Logic dictates that in order to build a quality structure, quality materials need to be used. Surprisingly this idea escapes many who undertake the process of trying to add muscle to their frame. There are many reasons why people opt for less-than-optimal food sources in their quest for growth, a few of which we will look at in this chapter. The take away lesson here is simple:

Steak, rice, eggs, and oatmeal will build a more appealing and healthy body than milk, cheeseburgers, pizza, and ice cream every single time. Consider it one of JP's laws of modern BroScience.

Bulking and Cutting

One common approach that has existed in weight training circles for some time is the notion of "bulking and cutting", spending a dedicated amount of time eating loads of food and training "for mass" followed by a period where the efforts are focused on ridding the body of the fat accumulated in the process. Most competitive bodybuilders use this method in varying degrees. The "off season" or time of year where the bodybuilder is not competing is spent pushing the weights and food intake hard in an effort to add as much new muscle to the frame as possible. The "pre-contest" phase begins normally sixteen weeks out from contest time and consists of a strict diet, lots of vigorous cardiovascular exercise, and a more moderate approach to the weights.

The above method works very well, and has long been the standard practice for the majority of successful bodybuilders though it is important to note a few things regarding its implementation.

First, most competitive bodybuilders (we will leave alone the enhanced vs natural topic, understand that my generalizations here apply to both camps) are dealing with a pretty solid genetic deck to begin with. Most are not likely to pile on the fat like a textbook endomorph with an office job that is new to lifting weights.

Second, the bodybuilder understands the value of diet, and though their off season phase may include a bit more less-than-optimal food, they are for the most part very aware of their intake in terms of macronutrients and overall food sources.

Jelly Donuts, Snickers bars, Pop Tarts, and pizza do not an impressive physique make.

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Bodybuilders know this and use their off-season time to pack in the good food sources (along with some looser offerings peppered in) in high volume to feed their expanding muscles, not their expanding love handles.

Third, most bodybuilders will enter their pre-contest phase with a body fat percentage not much outside of single digits, usually no higher than the low teens. The bodybuilder understands that shedding the fat takes hard work and discipline that, in my opinion, is paralleled by few other competitive athletes. They do not want to finish the off season out as a sloppy, over fat mess that will have to double their efforts in order to get their bodies looking contest ready in sixteen weeks.

Given these facts, it is clear that the more recreational lifter or gym goer often misunderstands the idea of "bulking and cutting". Many have long used these methods, or at least paid lip service to them. In my observation, most are either always in the midst of a "bulk" or a "cut" when asked, and their explanation is offered in an almost apologetic fashion. This is done seemingly to serve as a cover as to why they are not where they would like to be in terms of their body composition. Doing a "Dirty Bulk" is appealing to many since it is viewed as an absolute excuse for completely irresponsible behavior in terms of one's diet. The same half-assed effort applied during the inevitable "cut" perpetuates the yo-yo cycle of fat fuck to skinny-fat fuck that so many get stuck in for the sake of saving themselves the anguish of some hard work and accountability.

The fact of the matter (and the recurring theme in this book) is that manipulating one's body composition in a favorable manner takes hard work and loads of consistency, few will demonstrate their willingness to put forth both of these and kick some ass. In this regard I am not a fan of the bulk and cut approach, and abstain from using those terms regularly in my vocabulary when dealing with trainees.

A mass gain program should always be implemented responsibly. This saves gallons of milk and gallons tears cried when the inevitable "before" pictures are taken in the mirror in the ill-fitting boxer briefs that you just can't get to cover your ass crack because of your back fat, and ultra hot love handles.

Speaking of Milk….

"GOMAD"?

I was never terribly fond of that acronym. It always sounded a bit too much like "gonad" to me. The similarity in the way the words sound can be misleading as well since I often classify things that are the best in their class as being "the balls". When it comes to building muscle and not becoming a barrel ass in the process, drinking a gallon of milk each day certainly is not the balls, frankly, it sucks balls (or GONADS if you prefer).

Remember, the purpose of this book is to teach the methods that are best for adding muscle to one's frame, not to discuss the fastest way to add bodyweight, quality be damned, and make the needle on the scale move closer to a specific weight that you need to reach in order to feel good about yourself or reach a number that someone has told you is necessary for entry into some manhood club. I can all but guarantee you won't be happy once you get there; who wants to be classified as an "adult male" at the cost of not being able to pull "adult ass" because you look more like Rosie O'Donnell than a weight training male if you actually sack up enough to ditch your shirt at the beach.

The use of whole milk as a mass gain tool is probably responsible for the development of more fat bodies than any other single food item. This is largely due to the common practice of designating one gallon of whole milk as the default daily supplementary intake to the diet of a trainee looking to build muscle and strength (GOMAD).

In my experience the fat building effects of using whole milk as the driving dietary tool for growth are exacerbated by the frequent implementation of a very accidental diet made up primarily of calorically dense junk foods to go along with the ever present gallon of the white stuff.

This is undoubtedly a result of the "more is better", calorically driven beliefs that several possess when it comes to mass gain. The "calories are king" mentality is what causes people to adopt the practice of drinking a gallon of milk a day in the first place, so it is easy to see how the logic can be extended into the solid food (if you can call some of the sources that) component of the overall diet. There is no shortage of individuals on the Internet who gather in forums and discuss their "Eating PR's" or celebrate their exorbitant caloric numbers they are able to rack up plugging their foods into an online calorie counter. Most rationalize that their habits are a means to an end, that they are taking this approach in order to "bulk" or add mass, and that they will later "cut" or take the fat off that they have accumulated during this cycle. Many say things like "it's much easier to take fat off than to build muscle", which is true for most, but few realize just what goes into the process of dropping 25-40 lb of useless body fat while simultaneously holding on to what muscle they've managed to gain in the melee.

Some take the stance that aesthetics are not important to them; that they are only concerned with their ability to move weight from point A to point B. I certainly cannot criticize these individuals if those are their genuine beliefs. More often than not however in my experience, that line of thinking is learned via Internet "support groups" for those who also are unhappy with their physiques. It generally serves as a cover the person uses to rationalize (to themselves and others) that it is ok to gain and hold a significant amount of body fat because they don't possess either the know-how necessary, or the belief that they can in fact build a strong, aesthetically impressive, muscular physique without piling on hordes of body fat to conceal the work of art they've constructed underneath.

The human form is beautiful. It is a damn shame to see it covered in a blanket of gelatinous goo, particularly if it's owner is not comfortable within its skin.

All of these things being considered, what is it about the GONAD approach that is so popular?

Well, aside from its simple promotion by influential individuals, I feel that the single most significant reason for the popularity and frequent adoption of this decidedly sub-optimal method is that is quite frankly very easy to implement.

Some will challenge that statement arguing the difficulty that they have in getting a full gallon of milk down on a day-to-day basis. This argument however is very indicative of the individual's actual interest in affecting their current state, and just how much effort and or sacrifice they are willing to invest in their goal. Committing to drinking a gallon of a liquid daily on top of a normally quite shitty solid food diet hardly represents a large-scale sacrifice, or even commitment to a goal. Having a Herculean physique (or Apollonian for you bodybuilding history terminology nerds) is something that the overwhelming majority of the earth's population will never experience. It is truly an extraordinary accomplishment, and therefore requires extraordinary measures. If sucking it up and drinking a gallon of milk a day was all that was nutritionally required in order to add loads of muscle, don't you think there would be a lot more god-like physiques out there walking around?

This is an extension of the "magic pill" idea. Any company that releases a new thermogenic "fat burner" supplement with a solid mass marketing strategy is almost guaranteed to do very well in today's market. Why? Because people don't really want to work hard and be consistent with their diets in order to reach their goals. They'd much rather sit "dead of their ass" (as my Pop Pop used to say) and take a pill that promises them the body of the model in the company's add who was born with model genetics, eats a model's diet, and trains like someone who makes a living off of showing their model body.

Those results are coming any minute now, just wait.

I can't knock these people. Who wouldn't want it to be easier?

I know I would. I would love to take a pill and look like Dorian Yates. I've learned though by this point the hard way that it's flat out not going to happen and that hard work and accountability for my diet is the only way to get what I want. More and more often I deal with people who have learned the hard way that the GONAD approach was not the golden ticket that they were looking for, and that a four to six month detour from their quest to Jackedtown, Earth in order to shed a bunch of useless, unattractive body fat is not all that fun.

Getting the strong, healthy, attractive body that you envision when you picture your ideal day on this planet requires commitment and dedication, and the sacrifices are going to be greater than creatively developing techniques for crop dusting your co-workers with your milk farts so that you are not constantly taking the blame, or experimenting with different brands of baby wipes to determine which is best for wiping the black, putrid, peanut butter consistency shit off of yourself for the fourth time that day.

It's time to get some good information on nutrition and how to build up the body the right way. Be accountable, take responsibility and above all educate yourself about safe sex, because you will be having a lot more of it.

Section Two:

The Growth Principles in Application

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Chapter Four:

The Lasagna Diet: Building it Layers

Like all diets and training programs that I write for my clients, we will be discussing the idea of "layers". The concept is simple; we establish a foundation or "baseline", as we will be referring to it here, and then add additional layers to the baseline as needed in order to get the desired result. Likewise, if we overshoot our goal we can easily pull the diet back in easily by subtracting a layer or two and bringing things back a bit closer to the baseline. This super simple method has proven to be my most valuable tool in helping people ultimately get what they want out of their training in the most efficient manner possible.

Establishing the Baseline for Growth

It is very interesting to note that humans eat a "maintenance" amount of calories with remarkable reliability when they are eating "accidentally". Many scoff at this idea citing the accidental eater's lack of consistency from day to day in terms of diet as proof that this idea does not hold water. While it is true that they may take in a different amount of calories from day to day, when you tally up their caloric intake over the week, the numbers are surprisingly consistent from week to week. If you extrapolate further and look at monthly caloric intake instead, the numbers are even closer. Observing this trend is valuable in a few ways that we will address in this book, however in this instance we are going to use it to illustrate perhaps the most "un-scientific" method of determining "maintenance" calories for the "hard-gaining" individual, and yet the one that I have found to be the most accurate and reliable if a hard caloric accountability approach is to be used.

The simpler method I am referencing above is simply to log and track everything that you eat over the course of a week while eating accidentally. The trick is to "ignore the cameras" and do what you would normally do. Eat when hungry, and eat until you want to stop. At the end of the week, plug everything into a calorie counter and calculate your caloric intake over the last seven days. Once you have determined that number, divide by seven and you have your daily caloric intake for "maintenance". That value becomes the

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start point, which you then add to or subtract from in order to affect your body composition in the manner in which you desire.

As I previously stated, the above method has, in my experience, been the most reliable method with which to determine what "maintenance calories" are for you. However, there is a method that is simpler yet, and is my go-to in getting a client started on the road to their goals. We will have a look at that method next.

In the formula examples from before, the baseline caloric intake is determined by calculating basal metabolic rate plus activity level plus a small surplus. That's essentially what we are going to do except in a simpler manner that is not going to rely on numbers. We are going to establish a baseline to later titrate up or down based on how the body is responding and, most importantly, what we are seeing in the photos.

In the plans we will lay in this book we will rarely be talking in terms of calories or grams, particularly when we are talking about the baseline layer. We will mainly be talking portions with everything. We will start by determining what constitutes a portion for you.

Portions

Ok, we're going to make setting this up extremely easy. Take a minute and look down at your dick beaters. Now put those back in the refrigerator and take a look at your hands.

Your hands are going to be your main tools for reference in determining portion sizes for creating the baseline diet. We are going to concern ourselves with the two macronutrients that we are going to be directly assigning portions of to meals, Protein, and Carbohydrates.

A portion of Protein is going to be the area of the palm of your hand. This means the palm, not including the fingers (though in this context we will be using this measurement as the minimum amount acceptable not as the recommended serving). This means its width, height, thickness, girth, volume, area, etc. You get the point.

A portion of Carbohydrates is going to be the size of your clenched fist.

This "fist and palm" (you know what goes here) method allows for a surprising amount of consistency in the intake of macronutrients and calories when the numbers of portions per meal and number of meals per day are kept consistent.

This method obviously applies to the meals in which solid foods are used. We will be looking at building shakes soon since most reading this will include at least one or two shakes as meal replacements each day.

Here is the obligatory list of recommended sources of protein and carbohydrates.

Protein Sources for Mass Gain:

Steak: All kinds. Glorious, glorious steak should be a staple in a diet designed to add muscle to one's frame. This extends to roasts in the crock-pot as well. (Note: One of my favorite mass gain staples is a chuck roast in the slow cooker.)

Ground Beef: No need to buy Extra Lean. When it becomes relevant you can drain it anyway.

Whole Eggs: I'm fond of the Omega 3 kind but it's not the most important thing ever.

Chickens: Literally all of the chicken parts are OK, Legs, Thighs, Wings, etc. When packing it on you don't need to be just a breast man.

Cottage Cheese: I can't stand the stuff myself, never have been able to. Go for the Lower Fat varieties though here.

Ham: This is one that I am very fond of, and that gets overlooked al the time. Eat the hell out of it as a change of pace. Remember, the mass gain is the time to eat the fattier meats. This is why we stick to base diet before adding layers by default. Most are going to grow just off of the consistency of the nutrients and calories from the base layer.

Other Pork Cuts: Loin, chops. Get it in like a Jewish runaway pissed off at their parents.

Fish: All types. Seafood in general is a great, low-fat (except cold water fish like salmon which are loaded with healthy fats) source of protein. Use it liberally in your diet.

Carbohydrates for Mass Gain:

Rice: The king. Buy a lot, you should be eating it daily.

Oats: Old Fashioned or Steel Cut are the best. A classic, nutritious carb source.

Pasta: Yep, I said it. Portion control people; no salad bowls of Fettucine Alfredo before bed, save that for your free day.

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Yogurt: One of my favorites. Is there anyone that does not like the taste of yogurt? Go after the fat free or low fat choices.

Dark Breads: Whole Grains are best. Stay away from white breads.

Fruit: You can definitely use it here. It's a good idea to have at least one carbohydrate portion come from fruit each day.

The above lists are by no means complete. There are plenty of excellent sources of both good quality protein and carbohydrates to choose from. What you are looking for is a single ingredient food more than anything else. Also, the closer the food to being a source of only one macronutrient, the better. This becomes more important in the context of dieting for fat loss more than it is with mass gain, but remember, we want to be able to keep score and single ingredient, primarily single-macro foods make this process much easier.

Shakes

Shakes make everything a lot easier. Most will find it difficult, at least initially to get in six or more meals made up of quality solid foods per day. This could be due to a lack of sufficient appetite, or even more often, just day-to-day schedule/lifestyle considerations getting in the way.

Most all will agree that drinking down a bit of liquid is a lot easier than gnawing away on a piece of meat and some rice or a potato while going about the activities of s busy day. Many will claim that shakes are much less desirable than whole foods for meals from a nutrient usage or overall health standpoint, and I agree with that statement when taken at face value.

I however work with real live human beings with real live psychology, most of who are not competitive bodybuilders. If the decision is to have a nutritious shake made of high quality ingredients or skip a meal, which do you think is going to be preferred?

As I've stated before in my writings on the internet and in other works the general trend that I've observed is that the more emphatic and absolute someone is about there being one right way of doing something, the more completely full of shit they ultimately are.

The general rule is that I stick by with my people is to get a maximum of fifty percent of your days meals from shakes. This will mean three solid food meals, three shakes for most. Adding three shakes to the normal American diet of three solid meals (which less

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and less people actually follow these days by the way) is a simple way of getting the requisite meals in for the day in order to get after your goals nutritionally.

In the above instance you can see that there is not necessarily a need for a major lifestyle overhaul for most people who are already heading in the right general direction in order to get on a solid diet with good consistency and accountability.

Again people, the theme here is that this stuff is simple but not easy.

Building a Shake

As for constructing the actual shakes, my general rule is as follows:

For persons with a bodyweight of less than two hundred pounds I will generally recommend a shake with roughly fifty grams of protein from a high quality whey protein powder.

For those who weigh more than two hundred pounds, and who are holding a significant amount of muscle to be at that weight (no 170lbers carrying 80lbs of fat) I will normally prescribe a shake with around seventy-five grams of protein.

If the shake is being used as a meal replacement for any of the meals other than the last meal of the day, then the person will add a roughly equivalent amount (in grams) of carbohydrates to the shake. Ultimately it is not terribly important what the carbohydrate source is here, though I am highly partial to the use of oats for this purpose.

If the last meal of the day is to be a shake, which it will be for most more often than not due to the recommendation that the last meal be protein-only (which we are about to discuss), the shake will consist of the recommended amount of protein grams mixed in water or a zero calorie liquid such as diet soda or Crystal Light.

Goodnight Carbohydrates

One of the more controversial topics that I've talked about a lot on the Internet is the idea that one should taper their carbohydrate consumption out as the day progresses. For different individuals with different goals the time of day at which carbohydrates will be eliminated from the diet will vary. One constant among virtually every single person who

I work with on the topic of diet however is that the last meal of the day will contain no carbohydrates.

None.

This means a meal made up entirely of protein (with attached fats being acceptable in the case of solid foods).

This recommendation, like many of my others, is met with a lot of opposition on the Internet from people who have much more classical education than I, though are inferior in both dance ability and good looks. This particular idea is one that the nerdier types tend to dispute saying that there has never been any research done to support that this is anything more than "BroScience". I am completely at peace with that. I have used this method with very predictable result myself with and hoards of trainees. The data gathered from those experiences is what leads me to continue making the recommendation that this principle be used.

BroScience Alert!!! Proceed with caution.

The explanation that I received for why this is so effective a long time ago is that by eliminating the intake of carbohydrates beyond a certain time of day, the body uses up the glycogen that it has stored during the later hours of the night and during sleep. In the event that fasted cardiovascular activity is being performed first thing in the morning, the body rapidly runs through the small amount of glycogen that is left and then proceeds to use body fat as the primary fuel source for the activity.

Sounds good, right?

I thought so, and still do. I always found that by doing this, people would consistently lose more body fat than those who would eat carbohydrates in each meal right up until bedtime.

So if this is a book on mass gain, why are we concerned about depleting glycogen stores, and burning more body fat during fasted morning cardio sessions?

Well there are a few reasons.

For one, remember that we aren't trying to fat fuck anyone here, we are trying to build a larger, more muscular, lean, physically attractive physique that is capable of both attracting and manhandling the caliber of female that you are proud to show off in public, not just via the perfectly lit, flattering facebook pic that she nailed on the thirty-seventh try.

You are not off the hook for cardiovascular training.

Besides desiring to keep the fat at bay and minimize its accumulation during a period of deliberate caloric excess, it is generally good to be able to tie your own shoes or take the stairs to the third floor in the event of an out-of-order elevator catastrophe. Keeping up with your cardio is very conducive to being able to accomplish either of those tasks.

Since we are by definition bodybuilding here, we are going to behave as such and do our cardio. Since we are going to do it we may as well maximize its effectiveness and do it fasted and glycogen depleted. Enter the first reason why we use the carb cut-off or curfew (use whichever terminology you prefer).

The second reason for the early bedtime for the rice and pasta is that at some point we are more than likely going to want to get leaner than normal. There is usually a vagina at the root of this one, or more specifically the pursuit of said vagina(s) in places where it is socially acceptable to go shirtless. Like the competitive bodybuilder who doesn't want to let things get too out of hand in the off season, a responsible he-man should endeavor to always be a few weeks away from "photo ready" during a mass gain period. Since habits are difficult to break and creating new ones can take a few weeks, it is a good practice to have your diet adhere to the same basic template regardless of the particular goal you are in pursuit of at the moment. If you do that, it is just a matter of manipulating a few variables and upping the cardio to get you ready for the hunt.

The last reason that I will list is definitely the simplest but most likely the most important and that is:

Those who tuck the carbs in after ALF tend to gain less body fat than during a mass gain than those that let them stay up late and not brush their teeth.

H-2-O GO!

So you want to drink a gallon of something?

I know, you've heard this one a million times. Your body is seventy percent water, water is needed for every cellular function in your body, blah, blah, etc.

Boring I know.

Fact of the matter though is that water is very important when you are trying to grow. It is difficult for a dehydrated body to do pretty much anything. A hydrated body with hydrated muscles is a happy body, and a happy body will give you the panties a lot sooner than a bitchy, pissed off body that hasn't been getting their water.

Simple enough?

Basically you need to beat your thirst to the punch.

Don't be thirsty, ever.

If you are, you are already in the beginning stages of dehydration. You will never get the most out of your training and dietary efforts if you aren't adequately hydrated.

I can't emphasize this enough. If you haven't been getting enough pure, cold, water, see what happens when you up your intake consistently for a while. Aim for a gallon of water each and every day, more if it is hot outside and you are active and sweating a lot from activity like working, dancing, rollerblading, or noodling (don't let the cool waters surrounding you fool you, you're dehydrating, take a break every fish or two and sip some Aquafina).

Call it GOWAD if you must, just do it.

Diet sodas and other diet drinks are great, I drink them a lot. I'm not a coffee drinker, but it falls into this category as well. Make sure that you are adding an equal amount of water for each one of these that you have each day.

Bonus: The Greyskull Method for Rapid Re-Hydration

Ok so if you haven't been getting enough water, if your pee is yellow and not clear, you need to fix it. Don't worry; chicks dig clear showers as well, though stopping to piss three times during the act can be frustrating (see my comments on sacrifices).

Here is my recommendation for getting hydrated in a hurry. This is what we do with fighters post weigh in. Drop MeleeMMA a message on the board on strengthvillain.com if you want to learn more about how we do it in that application.

For most of the readers of this book we are simply going to show how to get your hydration levels up within the context of the needs of an average dude.

Get yourself a large cup, a half-gallon of Gatorade or Powerade, and a half-gallon of water. Mix the two in the cup (you'll need to pour them in, drink them and then refill. Sounds like a no-brainer I realize, but I've actually had people tell me that they couldn't fit it all in the cup before) in a 50/50 mix. Add Promethazine/Codeine cough syrup and Jolly Ranchers as desired (Ok, don't really do that).

Drink until all of the liquids are gone. This will take a little bit of time, but concentrate it to the period of an hour or so. Do this early in the morning, and once again in the afternoon (long enough before bed that you don't need to make mom throw your sheets in the bathtub until morning, she needs her sleep if you want waffles before school).

Do this twice per day in the above manner each day for four or five days. Drink water throughout the day as you normally would.

Do it once per day after that period is over for a few more days. I tend to do this while I am training and have found that to be beneficial in both fueling my workouts and keeping me from becoming dehydrated in the event that my daily water consumption dips.

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The Baseline Diet

Meal Frequency

Anyone desiring to add lean body mass to his frame needs to eat a lot of food, period.

This is understood at this point in the book, at least I hope. There are numerous benefits to eating smaller meals with a higher frequency (one more of which we discuss in the chapter on hunger) but arguably the most important here is that it is very difficult to take in enough quality food day in day out without breaking it up into roughly six meals.

Eating should take place at roughly two and a half to three hour intervals throughout the day. This will work out to six meals for most people, so we are going to be speaking with the assumption that everyone is operating on a diet of six meals per day.

What Constitutes a Meal in a Baseline Diet for Growth?

Protein

All six meals of the day are going to have one thing in common, a quality portion of protein. This means a serving of meat, or another approved protein source, the size of the area of your palm.

Most who I begin on a mass gain program will start out with protein portions larger than their palm as the recommendation. This is true almost all the way across the board, so for the purpose of this book we are going to consider the area of the palm as the absolute minimum amount of protein to be eaten in each meal.

The more common portion for a mass-gaining ass slayer in training is the palm plus the fingers.

Pick one of the protein sources from the list and get a palm (and fingers) sized portion of it.

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Carbohydrates

Each of the first five meals (See “Goodnight Carbohydrates” if you’ve skipped ahead) should contain carbohydrates as well as protein.

In a baseline diet for growth, the first three meals will contain two fist-sized portions of carbohydrates. The fourth and fifth meals will feature one fist-sized portion. The sixth and final meal will of course be composed of protein only.

Fat

In the baseline diet, we will not be deliberately adding foods that we consider to be either solely or primarily a source of fat.

The fats that do come into the diet at the baseline stage will be tagging along with the protein sources.

Due to its calorically dense nature, and its favorable hormonal influence, fat is typically our go-to tool for layering calories onto the base. We will be looking at this in greater detail in the next chapter on constructing and adding layers.

The Baseline Diet

So to put it all together, the baseline diet for a trainee looking to add mass will look like this:

Meal One:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

Two Portions Carbohydrate the size of the clenched fist.

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Meal Two:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

Two Portions Carbohydrate the size of the clenched fist.

Meal Three:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

Two Portions Carbohydrate the size of the clenched fist.

Meal Four:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

One Portion Carbohydrate the size of the clenched fist.

Meal Five:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

One Portion Carbohydrate the size of the clenched fist.

Meal Six:

One Portion Protein at least the size of the area of the palm of the hand.

I'll leave it up to you to fill in the blanks with specific foods. As long as you are getting the required portions of each macronutrient from good, single-ingredient sources like the ones on the lists, you are doing it right. I will also let you decide when and where you want to use shakes as meals. Just follow the guidelines on shakes from the previous chapter and you're good to go.

There you have it, the solid foundation that you need to build quality muscle. This base layer is going to be more than enough for many to see the changes that they want to see take place without any of the negative bullshit associated with the "more is better" "dirty bulking" approaches.

For those who have outgrown the foundation layer's ability to add mass, we will now look at constructing and adding layers on top of what we have already created.

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Adding Layers

More Protein

This is what I commonly refer to as the “no brainer” layer. It is exactly what it sounds like. We simply increase the size of the protein portions in the solid food meals and/or in the shakes. This is typically the first layer that we will employ in the rare cases in which we do not start out with this approach from the beginning. This idea, though certainly not patented or anything, was first driven home to me by the writings of Dante “DoggCrapp” Trudel who said that the first thing he would typically tell people who claimed to have solid diets but who weren’t gaining weight was, “Double the serving size of your protein shakes”. This certainly worked for me when I was keeping the shakes lighter and messing more with some of the other layers. Do not let its simplicity fool you, this method is the balls.

When the palm method is being employed to measure the protein portions, we simply extend the portion size to include the fingers as well. This can be done for all of the solid food meals, or for a few of them at a time, it is not terribly important. What is important is that however you are going about it you should be keeping track and monitoring the changes in physique that result.

With the shakes we will typically increase the amount of protein by a scoop or two per shake. Remember that a scoop of whey protein will typically contain roughly 100 calories, so it is easy to see to how a three to six scoop increase of the stuff per day can add a nice little boost to the caloric intake.

Likewise, adding “the fingers” to your solid food protein sources will up the calories for the day even greater nine times out of ten due to the fact that virtually all of the sources you will be using will be bringing calorie dense fats into the picture with them, at least to some degree.

The interesting phenomenon here is that protein foods are much harder to store as body fat (BroScience alert) than carbohydrates or fat sources. Protein is extremely valuable in the muscle building process, and it is difficult if not impossible to be taking in “too much”.

Keep in mind that many top bodybuilders will take in 500 g or more in the off-season, so do not stress yourself in thinking that you are somehow going to overdose on protein.

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More Fat: Olive Oil

Olive Oil is normally my first line of attack in terms of adding layers to the diet of a trainee who has built a baseline diet and is ready for more calories beyond the simple addition of more protein. This one I also adopted after reading the recommendations of Dante Trudel.

Extra Virgin Olive Oil is an excellent source of healthy fats. It contains a slew of antioxidants that aren't present in other oils. Likewise, the Extra Virgin offering has more mono-unsaturated fatty acids than your garden variety Olive Oil. The consensus at this point is that there are many health related positives associated with Olive Oil consumption. It has been shown to be very heart healthy, as well as lowering LDL cholesterol and raising HDL cholesterol.

For our purposes in this book however, the most relevant characteristic that it has is its calorically dense nature, being that it is entirely a fat source.

One tablespoon of Extra Virgin Olive Oil contains 120 healthy, hypertrophy-assisting calories. It is easily added to shakes to boost the caloric content of the mix and therefore the caloric intake for the day, week, and so on.

Generally speaking we will begin the use of the Olive Oil as a calorie-adding layer by mixing two tablespoons of the stuff into each of the shakes for the day. This could mean two or three (or more: see "Shot and a Meal") depending on the individual.

Let's assume an application where you are adding two tablespoons of Olive Oil to three shakes per day. This works out to a 720-calorie addition to the day, or 4,320 calories for the week (720 calories x 6 days= 4,320).

Based on the feedback from its addition, which we discuss in the section on monitoring progress, another tablespoon can be added to the shakes, or even up to two, though most will not find this necessary. I will strongly caution against getting overzealous and adding a bunch of oils to your shakes at the start, this will undoubtedly leave you stranded on the toilet long after you are out of paper (or wet wipes if you are not one of those inadequately clean dry wipe people).

We will watch the progress once we begin using the oil in the shakes and if we aren't happy wit what we are seeing in the photos, in terms of the person getting a bit doughier than we would like to see, we will bump it back a bit. Normally we don't see this occur, but in the event that it does it is very easy to bump the intake back to one single tablespoon per shake, or even zero if the person was just a little trigger happy on adding the layers when they weren't necessarily warranted yet.

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“A Shot and a Meal”

One tried and true method of beefing up the protein (and caloric) intake for the day in a simple, easy to implement is the practice of drinking a small protein shake with each solid food meal (in addition to any meal replacement shakes already being used throughout the day). This tip was passed on to me by a former high-level competitive bodybuilder and helped me get past some serious mass barriers when I was at my largest. The shakes need not be large, even a single scoop (20-25g protein from most manufacturers) shake added to 3 meals throughout the day amounts to adding an additional three scoop (60-75g) shake to the day’s intake. For someone trying to push into the 400- 500g territory in order to grow this tactic is particularly valuable. The volume of the shake is easily managed since it amounts to little more than a shot of liquid. The use of milk and/or olive oil in the making of the shake can easily bump up the calories in the “shot” as well.

If a single tablespoon of Olive Oil were to be added to each of the three mini-shakes mentioned in the example above, the person would be consuming an additional 360 calories for the day. Use 4 oz of milk to mix the shot in and you’re up an additional 225 calories for the day. That would put you at 585 calories up, almost the caloric equivalent of a quart of whole milk, in just the add-ons to the “shot” layer, which is in itself an add on to the base of solid food meals and meal replacement shakes. It’s easy to see how simple and easy it is to add calories in small increments while maintaining accountability and easily tracking the effectiveness of each new addition.

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Gorging: The Weekly Spike

As I mentioned in the section on establishing the baseline, humans have a remarkable ability to consume a very consistent amount of calories when the intake is observed over longer periods of time. Generally we look at the diet in terms of a seven-day cycle, we will typically have six days "on" and one day "off". This applies for both those trying to add mass and those who are dieting to drop bodyfat. The "free day" as we refer to the seventh day is a free for all, no diet rules are in place on that day. This is done for both psychological and physiological reasons. Psychological in the sense that it serves as a break from the monotony and restrictions that a focused diet brings with it, and physiological in that the same break in dietary monotony serves as a (BroScience alert!) "reset button" on the week and prevents the body from adapting to the point of ceasing to progress.

Free Days will look totally different between individuals. For some who are dieting hard it may be an all day smorgasbord of pizza and ice cream. For those who are aggressively pounding large quantities of high quality foods all day throughout the week the day may look more like a day off from eating altogether. Many in this situation will eat two or three meals that day instead of all six to nine that they are eating on a normal day. Either way of approaching the day is acceptable, as the rule is that there are no rules on the free day.

Back to the original point here; we tend to eat roughly the same amount of calories from week to week. This is the case regardless of how the free day looks since most will have similar habits from week to week on their free days as well. What we are going to look at here is the construction of a surplus layer based on a large caloric "spike", or a series of spikes taken at intervals throughout the week. We know that the weekly caloric intake is a more reliable figure in predicting growth than the daily intake is. The weekly number is what we need to increase more than the daily. This is where the use of less than ideal sources such as fast food can safely enter the diet and be used productively.

So what do I use for the spikes?

How big of a spike am I trying to create?

Those two questions come with pretty simple answers. In the first case, it doesn't really matter all that much, though I highly recommend sticking to real foods that actually contain protein, think cheeseburger instead of ice cream sundae. As for how large of a spike we are trying to create, there is no hard and fast rule here. What's important is that the meal is much larger than normal, and brings to the table a load of additional calories.

It's no secret by now that eating a crap diet with regularity is going to produce a crap body. However, gorging on some sloppier food sources once or twice per week as needed can be a valuable layer to add for someone who is having some difficulty seeing the scale and measurements move despite having a solid baseline diet and other layers already in place. Five Guys Cheeseburgers and All-You-Can-Eat Crab Leg feasts do the trick quite

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well for me. I used to be a fan of the Chinese Buffet, and still will hit one on occasion, but my gorging tastes have refined a bit in the last few years (yes my nose was turned up as I typed that). What you use for a spike is up to you, start with one per week and monitor progress, add them as needed but resist the urge to "need" them because you want to, we are not doing a dirty bulk here remember. This tactic is typically reserved for those who are truly the "hard gainers" of the bunch, it is often the "last ditch", and is added once the others that we have already discussed have been implemented.

Don't kid yourself, if that description doesn't fit you, stick to limiting the junkier stuff to the free day.

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The “Calorie Bomb”: Greyskull Mega Mass 1000

One of the methods I have used frequently with many, particularly the younger crowd, with much success has been the addition of the “calorie bomb” or weight gainer shake. For the underweight individual looking to pack on some mass in a hurry this tactic will usually do the trick quite nicely. Those prone to easy fat gain would probably be better off using the shot and a meal method or one of the other layers before opting to implement this one.

The method involves drinking a very high calorie shake as the first thing in the morning (after the cardio session if there is one). Generally speaking the shake will be added for all six days of the week. If and when the progress from the addition of a single shake is “outgrown”, a second shake is added in lieu of the normal number two shake sometime in the midday or afternoon. The second shake is usually added on weight training days only at first, not because of a difference in caloric needs between training days and non-training days, but because limiting the second shake to training days only reduces the size of the layer being added to the weekly intake. If you haven’t gathered by now, the idea of adding things in small increments is one of the most vitally important principles to adding mass without significant body fat accumulation.

The recipe for the basic Greyskull “Calorie Bomb” Weight Gainer Shake is:

3 scoops (75g) Whey Protein (~300 Calories)

2 Tablespoons of Peanut Butter (200 Calories)

1 cup Dry Oats (315 Calories)

8 oz Whole Milk (150 Calories)

Ice Cubes

What this amounts to is about a one thousand calorie shake. The volume is less than one quart of whole milk, though the macronutrient content is much better for our purposes and on the thermodynamics end it beats the milk out by about 400 calories.

This shake added once per day, six days a week amounts to roughly a 6,000 addition to the weekly intake. The addition of a second shake on training days would boost the intake up another 3,000 or so (though you have to figure that the shake would be replacing another, smaller, shake at those times so it’s not truly a 6-9,000 calorie additional layer).

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It is easy to see why this is not a tactic to be employed by someone who is comfortably growing already on a base diet, or who is prone to accumulating body fat easily. Again this is most applicable for youngsters who are trying to add weight for sports, or for extremely ectomorphic “hardgainer” types who truly have difficulty making the weight go up despite having a solid base layer in place.

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When/Why to Add a Layer

So now we have this toolbox of layers, where, how and when do we use them?

Here's the finesse side of things. The next chapter will deal with tracking progress and monitoring your gains. The trick to mass gaining and not getting fat in the process is to maximize your potential for growth within a certain time frame without having too much excess left over to be stored as fat.

We want to push the envelope on intake without seeing the goo come on. We have a few tricks up our sleeves to help us out with this. Remember, we're hitting the cardio (if not, start) a few days per week at least, fasted first thing in the morning, and we're eliminating carbohydrates before bed. Combine that with the fact that we're creating our surplus with healthy, high quality, single-ingredient food choices, and the likelihood that we are going to be storing a bunch of fat just keeps decreasing.

We want to build as much muscle as we can in as short of a time frame as we can. In order to do this we need to make sure our tank is topped off at all times. Stagnation is not an option, the weights need to be going up in the gym, and we need to be growing.

As I mentioned, we are going to be looking at how to track the progress next, but here is the simple rule for adding layers to keep in mind as you read on:

Run the base diet first (for at least four weeks), and if you are not seeing negative feedback in your data points, try adding a layer.

Likewise, anytime you stall on growth, add a layer.

If what you are doing is working, you do not need to change it. Resist the urge to add a layer for the hell of it; you'll probably just end up having to pull it back in after the next progress check anyway.

That brings us to subtracting layers. This should go without saying, but if you are getting poor feedback from your progress checks as in you are starting to look more like a roly-poly than desired, back it up a layer.

This is why it is so important to make changes gradually and add layers one at a time. If you come out the gate using all of the above methods, I promise you that you will be getting fat. However, some behemoths may graduate to using all of the above concurrently and still be getting awesome progress by keeping the fat at bay with the techniques mentioned before and keeping the sources clean. What matters is that you are consistent and try something long enough to get an accurate measurement of its effect.

Add one at a time, subtract one at a time. Don't fuck with it if it's working. Simple enough.

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Chapter Four:

Tracking Progress

Keeping Score

In order to gain muscle mass without gaining a bunch of body fat in the process it is important to track your progress. It's difficult to see where you stand and how well your current approach is working if you are not "keeping score".

Changing your body composition for the better is all about manipulating variables; making small adjustments, recording results, and adjusting again based on your findings. In the literal sense it is a very scientific process. As any scientist will tell you, data is king.

For our purposes here, we will be concentrating on a few key data points. They are as follows:

The Training Journal

The training journal should include sets, reps, notes on the individual workouts, everything that may be relevant to the overall process. This one's easy, get yourself a notebook, and keep a digital version in the training logs section on strengthvillain.com.

The food log

The food log should be detailed and accurate with everything recorded (in portions is fine) including free days.

Front, rear, and side full-body photos

Photos should be taken every four weeks (though sometimes I will request them at two week intervals) in as close to the same conditions as possible. This means same lighting,

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same clothes, same conditions (how recently you've eaten, hydration) etc. This is a requirement for anyone who works with me directly in the consulting realm, and it is one component of the data package that the client provides me with that I would be nearly crippled in terms of tailoring advice to his or her needs without.

The waist measurement

The waist measurement should be taken (at the navel) three times, and averaged once every two weeks.

Scale weight

Should be taken every two weeks along with the measurements. We will be looking at this in more detail very soon.

The above points of reference should be tracked with as much accuracy as possible. I tell all of my clients that the more data they can provide me with the better. They are not presented in any particular order, however scale weight is appropriately situated at the bottom of the list. We will be looking at why that is momentarily.

Each of these data points provides valuable information by which the effectiveness of the current approach will be evaluated at two to four week intervals. The findings will influence what, if any, variables are to be manipulated in the weeks to come, and by how much.

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Weighing the Value of the Scale

Chasing scale PR's, impatiently monitoring bodyweight from day to day, desiring to see significant increases in weight in short periods of time is a condition that is likely to lead to an undesirable body composition. The human body can only build muscle so fast, no amount of staring at the scale will change this fact. What a scale focus will do however is program one to be rewarded and feel good when they see a larger number. It is much easier to make the number on the scale go up by adding fat than it is by adding muscle (or by wearing more clothes next time you weigh yourself, some of you know what I'm talking about). Simply overeating will cause a person to gain weight any day, lots of hard work in the weight room and behind the table will make the number go up on the scale slowly and steadily while also making the image in the mirror more of a bipedal lubricant.

Bodyweight is easily manipulated up or down by adjusting variables such as hydration levels and carbohydrate intake. It is entirely possible to drop one's weight on the scale by 20 lb or more through dehydration and carbohydrate depletion, this is how fighters and other weight class athletes "make weight" and then show up to the event 24 hours later weighing 20 lb more on the scale. Likewise, Powerlifters have been known to "put on a bloat" to either make the next weight class up (for posterity's sake or to pursue a record in the class). Again the idea is adjusting the number on the scale by making a few changes to their diet and or exercise habits for a few days or just a day in some cases. The point in discussing these things in the context of this book is to demonstrate just how irrelevant scale weight can be relative to data points that are more indicative of true progress towards a stronger and more muscular physique, which is our focus here.

Despite its shortcomings when used as the sole reference for measuring progress in mass gain, the number on the scale is valuable data. When you add muscle to your frame you will weigh more, it's as simple as that. As we've discussed quite a bit by now though, weighing more on the scale doesn't necessarily mean that you have more muscle.

Compulsively checking the scale each day is not going to make the growth happen any sooner. I recommend weighing in every two weeks. It doesn't matter if you weigh in in the morning or at night, just keep the conditions consistent. Don't try to compare your weight first thing in the morning after your morning pee with a weight taken fifteen minutes after your fifth meal of the day while you're en route to shit out something the size of a housecat.

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What are We Looking For?

OK, so now we know what data points we are looking at, so what are we looking for?

In the Training Log

It is next to impossible to add significant amounts of strength without experiencing attendant muscular hypertrophy. Growth is a side effect of getting stronger. Weight training forces the body to adapt, and in since we are feeding it in a manner that is conducive to building lean body mass, the adaptation is growth. It is for this reason that I am concerned with how the performance on the workouts, whether in bar weight or rep records, is progressing. If the trainee is getting stronger, and is providing an environment that promotes growth, they will grow, simple as that.

What we're looking for in the training log is simple. The weights being used and/or the repetitions being completed (performance) should be on the climb.

In the Photos

The old saying "A picture is worth a thousand words" is perhaps as applicable to building a strong, desirable, body with a favorable body composition and loads of muscle as it is in any other context that I can think of.

The goal is growth. We want to see that there is "new muscle". Particular areas of interest in the photos will be the neck, shoulders (width), legs, and back. It's in those areas that growth will be most noticeable at first.

What we don't want to see is an expansion of the waist (see waist measurement), a dramatic softening of the neck and face regions, or the development of love handles. The photos do not lie. Most who take "before" shots are shocked when they see what they actually look like. We are unable to get an accurate feel for out appearance from a mirror, the photos are a must. If you are getting soft you will see it in the photos.

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With the Tape Measure

We're only concerning ourselves with one measurement for the time being, the waist. Feel free to add other measurements such as chest, arm, neck, or thigh circumference, and log those as well at two-week intervals.

We are focused on the waist however because that is where we will see the fat-fucking process beginning to take place.

Now here is where it gets interesting, and why it is so critical to have multiple data points;

If your waist is expanding, it does not by default mean that you are getting fat.

Muscle takes up space too. When I was 17 and weighed 140 lbs I had a 28.5" waist. At my leanest 230 lbs I had a 34" waist. I was not fat at 230, as a matter of fact, my body fat percentage (notice how we haven't discussed that one as a data point) was probably very close to the same. My waist simply grew with me and you will see this too, especially if you are starting out without a lot of muscle and very "underweight".

This is where you need to consult the photos.

Is the expansion the result of growth, evidenced by the increase in shoulder and back size, which would indicate significant enough growth in the trunk to increase the waist measurement?

Or…

Is there little noticeable difference in the upper body musculature, but a small, noticeable difference in the appearance of the waist?

If it's the first one you're good. Drive on.

If it's the second one it might be time to bump it back a layer. Chances are you either got a bit overzealous in your application of additional layers beyond the base, or you just haven't been training or at least not training hard enough to drive the progress.

In any case, you should not see an increase in waist measurement of more than an inch in a month unless you are adding too much fat.

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On the Scale

As I mentioned before, if you are gaining muscle you will be gaining weight, unless you are losing fat at the same time.

It does happen. I know you've been told you can't do it and all, but that's bullshit. This is another reason why watching the scale alone is dangerous in terms of poising you to fat-fuck yourself.

Imagine a guy who is carrying some extra fat and not a ton of muscle who embarks on a solid weight training and cardio program like my Greyskull LP. Imagine he's been eating "accidentally" for some time now and is relatively new to working out.

Now let's say he hits it hard for three weeks, kills it in the gym and doesn't miss a step on his base diet. He feels great, he's getting compliments from people at work, and he's happy with what he is seeing in the mirror. He's been holding off on weighing himself because he wants it to be dramatic when he finally looks. He picks a day and hops on the scale.

"What the fuck?!"

"I *lost* two pounds?!"

Suddenly his whole mindset changes; now the people who had complimented him were just blowing smoke, what he was seeing in the mirror was wishful thinking, etc. He needs to be two hundred pounds, and he needs it now. This losing two pounds bullshit is not going to work, that Johnny Pain is full of shit, he just wants to make guys lean he doesn't know shit about growing.

So faced with this disappointing information from this little machine in the bathroom, his only point of reference, he decides he needs to up his food intake.

"You can't grow on chicken and rice" he remembers hearing.

It's time to loosen it up a bit. He tells himself that he's growing and can handle hitting Burger King a few times a week, he needs the calories.

"Fuck that cardio bullshit, I bet that's why I lost weight".

He ditches the cardio and starts sleeping in the extra hour instead. The milk idea is sounding better and better, so he starts doing that. He hears my voice still echoing to a degree though so he says he's "only going to do a half gallon a day".

Two weeks go by and he hops back on the scale.

"WOO HOO, up eleven pounds! I knew I just wasn't eating enough"

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He's now well on his way to reaching his goal of two-hundred pounds and even closer to his unintended but inherited goal of fat-fucking himself with a vengeance.

All of this because the scale was his only data point and he didn't realize that the two pounds that he had lost was part of the six pounds of body fat he had shed in those three weeks, and that the two pounds represented the net loss after factoring in the four pound muscle gain that he had experienced in the same time.

Use all of the data points and put them up against each other for comparison.

How Much Weight Should I be Gaining?

This varies a whole lot from individual to individual, however, the human body can only grow so quickly. If you are adding much more than five or six pounds per month, you can be sure that you are adding quite a bit of fat as well.

Remember this when you hear the tales of the three-month sixty-pound gains.

"It's mostly all muscle" or *"I probably only gained ten pounds or so of fat"*

Bullshit.

The scale should go up slow and steady each month (unless you are working the base diet, are relatively new to dieting and training, and started out with a bit of fat that you are losing at the same time) but if it's climbing at an astronomical rate and you aren't on drugs, you're getting fat my friend.

Getting Smooth

Before wrapping up this chapter I would like to talk about the idea of "getting smooth" versus fat-fucking yourself. This is generally going to apply to the guy starting out very lean. We see this a lot from guys coming under my influence from either a CrossFit background, or a bodybuilding style background, in the more ab-obsessed sense where they have yet to build any discernable muscle mass, but have gotten themselves pretty lean (see high school Johnny Pain).

For these individuals it may be difficult to accept any fat accumulation. Bear in mind that I don't want anyone to get fat in this process, however, we will be creating a surplus, and

really the only real way to know that we are in a true caloric surplus often times is that we are gaining a small bit of fat.

This leads us to the idea that if you are starting out very lean, you need to accept that in order to pursue a significant mass gain you are going to have to wave bye bye to your deeply chiseled abs for a little while. They'll be back, I promise, and they'll look way cooler when they're a lot thicker and stronger.

Getting smooth means losing a bit of definition. If you're striated through the chest, you'll lose that most likely, if you're vascular in place other than your extremities, you probably won't see that for a little bit either.

Getting smooth does not mean getting love handles or a gut. There is a colossal difference. Google some pictures of some bodybuilders off-season to see what I am referring to (just not Lee Priest).

Remember what smooth looks like and understand that smooth is not only acceptable, smooth is good. Use the layering method to make sure that smooth does not turn into fat.

Get smooth, get huge. When you're ready to strip it down a bit, do it and show the world your new super hero physique.

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Chapter Six:

Hungry Like the Wolf

The anabolic Boldenone Undecylate has long been favored by many in the bodybuilding world for it's ability to add to a testosterone base and facilitate, slow, but lasting gains of lean mass as well as vascularity and improved endurance in some. One of the most commonly reported side effects of Boldenone, or Equipoise as it is more commonly called, is the insatiable appetite that it can cause. The drug has been a favorite for a bodybuilder looking to get leaner for some time, but many find it's hunger inducing side effect to be counterproductive when looking to get leaner since the desire to eat is simply unbearable at times. This presents a serious obstacle for someone trying to reduce their caloric intake and stay consistent with a strict diet. Likewise, many will argue that Nandrolone (Deca Durabolin) or another anabolic may be better suited for mass gain cycles due to it's arguably better performance in adding mass by its simple inclusion. The fact remains though that many favor "EQ" for this purpose still because the appetite it creates trumps the other drug's edge on gains by simple facilitation of a greater and more consistent caloric intake, the most important variable in the mass gain equation.

My purpose in illustrating this point is not to advertise one drug over another for mass gain, and certainly isn't intended to recommend or condone the use of anabolic steroids. The idea I am pointing out here is that a big appetite is the most valuable weapon that a person looking to add more muscle to their frame can have in their arsenal. If you want to add muscle to your frame there is no way around that fact that you will need to eat a lot of food. In my estimation and in my experience the overwhelming majority of people who label themselves "hard gainers" would be more appropriately titled "under eaters". The fact remains that your body requires a surplus of calories (though not a gross surplus lest you "fat-fuck" yourself in short order as we've discussed) in order to grow, and those calories need to get down the hatch somehow.

There are several methods for making the process of getting adequate calories and macronutrients simpler and easier to consistently do, however few attributes would be considered more of a blessing to an individual looking to add mass to their frame more than a voracious, eat the ass from a skunk type appetite. Some are born this way as my girl Gaga would say, but most are not as gifted in that regard and will find getting the necessary numbers in for the day, particularly if they are not just getting started in the game of gains, to be quite laborious. Therefore, most will be very receptive to any and all help they can receive when it comes to making themselves hungry like the wolf.

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Frequent Meals and Their Effect on Hunger

One of the recurring themes in all of the diet stuff that you will see from me is the use of frequent, small (though this is a relative term) meals. The reasoning behind the small meals changes with the application, but suffice to say that a grazing style of eating is going to be the way to go when it comes to working towards just about any body composition goal (at least the ones that people commonly strive for, the case of the sumo wrestler would be an exception here).

In the instance of mass gain the two main reasons for frequent feedings are maintaining a positive nitrogen balance (critical "bro-science" principle, highlight it), and just plain being able to get enough high quality foods in over the course of the day. An additional benefit however is the observable fact that frequent, smaller feedings tend to cause an increase in appetite once the initial adjustment to the increase in food consumption (if you were previously taking in considerably less food which is the case more often than not) is complete. In the beginning trainees are taught to "eat on the clock" or to feed at specifically pre-determined times throughout the day. This ensures that the numbers are hit for the day and that the timing is there. A common practice with many of my consult clients at this point is to set reminders in their smart phone to let them know when it is time to eat. This allows them to "automate" things a bit more so long as they create a rule that they are eating within fifteen minutes or so of the alarm sounding each time.

Perhaps the coolest part about this is the Pavlovian-like conditioning that the trainee experiences in that they start to anticipate the upcoming meals with a feeling of hunger. In the case of someone aggressively dieting in an effort to drop body fat (which will be the topic of an upcoming book) this hungry feeling is a bit more understandable, it's simply a matter of the small, low fat meal from a few hours ago is long gone and they are eagerly awaiting more food. In the mass gain context though, the hunger conditioning is more of a blessing definitely, and is almost always perceived as such.

Fasted Cardio

We talked about the why behind the inclusion of cardiovascular training into a mass gain program in terms of the effects on how much body fat you gain and how much stamina you have for tearing up some ass. Now I'd like to take a minute to let you all in on another little benefit of this boring, monotonous activity.

Doing it first thing in the morning on an empty stomach will make you hungry all day long.

At least that has been my experience and the experiences of many others who I have had try this as a tactic to boost their appetite. I have yet to have it fail me in that role.

It's no secret by now that I am a fan and student of the writings of Dante Trudel. Though I have never met the man at this point, he has been one of the more major influences on how I go about training my clients. I was happy to see that he advocates this practice for the very same reason. His endorsement, when I read it a few years back, "validated" what I had always found odd about days that I did my cardio fasted first thing. I used to attribute the hunger to the fact that I was dieting at the time (hence the cardio), but quickly noticed that the hunger would show up like clockwork if I did the cardio fasted during a period of mass gain focus as well.

This influenced me to use it as a hunger-generating (and therefore growth-facilitating) tactic first and foremost, an interesting thing to point out to those who are apprehensive about doing the cardio while they are trying to gain weight.

Do it.

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Chapter Seven:

A Few Words About Training for Mass

This is not a book on training. These principles apply regardless of what program you are using so long as it a solid weight training program that focuses primarily on adding weight to big, compound movements.

Routines based around isolation work are not going to be nearly as effective for building muscle as a good, basic program that is centered around free weight exercises being performed in a moderate rep range.

I highly recommend you pick up my book "The Greyskull LP" if you are at a loss for what to do on the program front to accompany these methods. That is the basic program that I use with my clients nine times out of ten while they are applying the very methods in this book.

Regardless of what program you decide on, the most important thing is that you are consistent and intense in your sessions. Remember that you have a goal and that that motherfucking barbell is telling you that you can't reach your goal.

Show it who's boss, and bring it panties to prove your dominance over it. Barbells love panties.

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Chapter Eight:

Drugs

Shortest chapter in the book, hands down.

The principles in this book apply regardless of whether you are taking drugs or not. Many of those I learned the methods from were using drugs when they used these methods.

I have very successfully used these very methods in this very manner with both natural and enhanced trainees.

Growth is growth; drugs don't do it for you. The principles still apply.

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Conclusion

Well there it is. I've given you the proverbial keys to the kingdom. What you have been presented with are the principles that I have successfully used and will continue to use to help people get the bodies that they desire.

The fact remains that making this stuff work just right is much more art than it is science. A good trainer is part artist, part scientist. The topics presented in this book represent the science end of things. The art portion is the intelligent application of the correct technique or principle given the individual's unique situation.

There is no reason why this cannot be learned. The more practice one gets in doing this, the more proficient they become, as is the case with any skill. The important part now is that you are armed with the fundamentals and the tools needed to build up your body the right way without an ass-load of fat coming along for the ride.

As always, I remain accessible through my website strengthvillain.com if there are any questions that arise regarding any of the material in this book.

Additionally I do offer consulting services to help connect the dots for you (or your client) in a very direct manner should you desire to shorten the curve.

I do hope you've enjoyed this book; it certainly was a fun project for me. This topic is one of my specialties and is one that I am truly passionate about.

There have already been numerous requests for a book on getting lean, and I think that one would make a stellar companion to this volume, so I will be working on that title in the near future. Watch for it.

As always I appreciate your support and your purchase. I wish you the best of luck in your training and your life.

Make it count.

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